



## Finding Wholeness After Trauma

James S. Gordon, MD  
The Center for Mind-Body Medicine

September 24, 2019



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*Please note: The information provided on this program is intended for educational purposes only.*

*If you or a loved one needs professional support, please contact TAPS 24/7 at 800-959-TAPS (8277).*



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### Center for Mind-Body Medicine (CMBM) Teaching Thousands to Heal Millions

- CMBM founded by James S. Gordon, MD, a former NIMH researcher, in 1991
- Since 1994, almost 7,000 people have participated in our training programs for medical and mental health professionals, educators, peer counselors, and other community leaders
- Major programs in Bosnia, Kosovo, Israel, Gaza, Haiti, Jordan with Syrian refugees, with NYC fighter fighters after 9/11, in New Orleans (after Hurricane Katrina), Houston, Puerto Rico, and Northern California after climate-related disasters, with US active duty military and veterans, in 15 US medical schools, and on Pine Ridge and Standing Rock Indian Reservations
- 160+ faculty including US, Kosovo, Israel, Gaza, and Haiti (90 English speaking)

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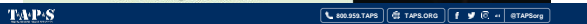
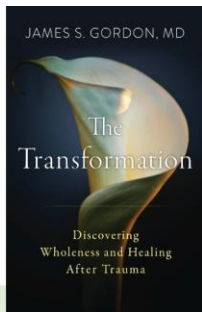
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**The Transformation**  
**Discovering Wholeness and Healing After Trauma**  
By: James S. Gordon, MD

A world-recognized authority in integrative medicine presents the most comprehensive evidence-based program to reverse the psychological and biological damage caused by trauma and transform its pain and loss into opportunities for finding growth in love and compassion, and finding meaning and purpose.



Scan here for more information  
or visit [cmbm.org/thetransformation](http://cmbm.org/thetransformation)



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## Trauma

Trauma means "injury"--  
to our mind, body, and spirit

It comes to all of us sooner or later



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## Change and Trauma

Healthy systems (beings) move toward complexity (includes differentiation and integration)

After trauma we tend to oscillate between rigidity (withdrawal, inhibition, flashback) and chaos (agitation, disorganization)



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## Trauma Can Produce...

- **Amnesia** and other loss of memory (perhaps due to damage to hippocampus and cortex)
- **Agitation**, probably secondary to ongoing high levels of epinephrine and norepinephrine
- **Flashbacks**, lack of connection between images and memory- perhaps due to damage to corpus callosum, hippocampus, parts of cerebellum

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## Trauma Can Produce...

- Increased stress response to subsequent trauma
- Increased incidence of depression, anxiety, separation anxiety
- Increased incidence of stress-related illness and substance abuse

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## CMBM Model

- Engages people in actively helping themselves. Focuses on strengths and capacity for self-reliance rather than psychopathology
- Non-stigmatizing
- Optimism rather than past trauma
- Builds resiliency and recovery
- Group format naturally reproduces camaraderie of military service
- Interfaces well with therapeutic and educational approaches
- Integrates well within existing structures: clinics, hospitals, community group
- Scientifically-validated approach
- Practical
- Learn techniques in small groups as **students**, not patients
- A new skill taught in each group
- Safe place with organized and consistent structure based on clear ground rules
- Helps people share without forcing
- **Meditative**: each person becomes aware of his/her thoughts, feelings, and sensations. No analyzing, interpreting, advising, or interrupting.

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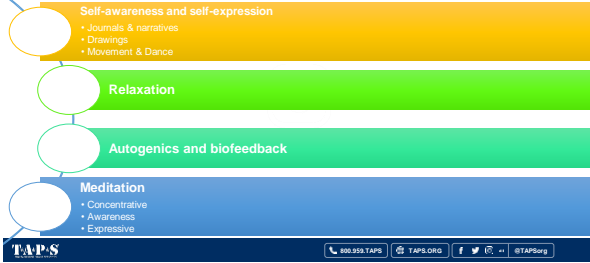
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## The CMBM Approach Self-Care is the Heart of all Health Care



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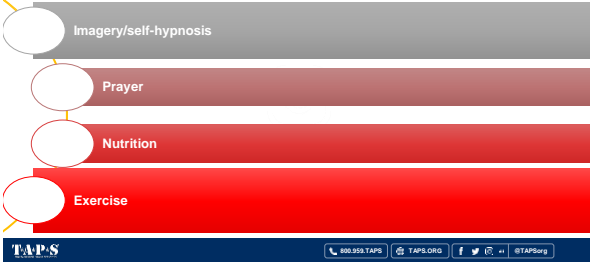
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## The CMBM Approach Self-Care is the Heart of all Health Care



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And meditation is central to self-care



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**Meditation**

- Concentrative
- Awareness
- Expressive

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**Overview of Meditation**

- Meditation and medicine: they come from the same Sanskrit root word, meaning to “take measure of” and “to care for”
- Definition: relaxed moment-to-moment awareness
  - A finger pointing at the moon
- Many kinds of meditation: Vigyana Bhairava Tantra, 112 kinds
- The basic kinds:
  - *Concentrative* – Mantra, Prayers, Visualization
  - *Awareness* – Vipassana, Mindfulness
  - *Expressive* – Dance, Chanting, Whirling, Fast Breathing, Qi Gong, Yoga

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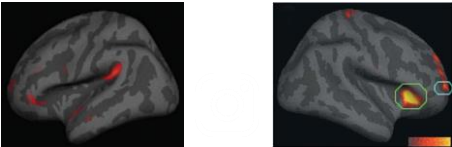
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**Meditation Changes Our Brain Anatomy**



Areas of increased thickness in red: insula, Brodmann area (BA) 9/10, somatosensory cortex, auditory cortex.

Lazar, S.W., Kerr, C.E., Wasserman, R.H., Gray, J.R., Greve, D.N., Treadway, M.T., McGarvey, M., Quinn, B.T., Dusek, J.A., Benson, H., Rauch, S.L., Moore, C.I., Fischl, B. Meditation experience is associated with increased cortical thickness. *Neuroreport*. 2005 Nov; 16(17): 1893-97

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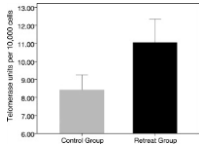
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## Meditation Changes Our Chromosomes



Jacobs, T.L., Epel, E.S. et al. Intensive meditation training, immune cell telomerase activity, and psychological mediators. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*. 2011 Jun; 36(5):664-81.

- **Telomeres:** "caps" at the end of our chromosomes
  - Decreases in length of telomeres associated with many chronic illnesses as well as decreased life span. Greater telomere length may be associated with increased longevity
- **Telomerase:** an enzyme that builds up the telomeres preserving healthy cell functioning
- Recent study found a significant increase in production of telomerase in people who had just completed a meditation retreat

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## Meditation is Effective For...

- Depression
- Pain
- Anxiety
- Substance Abuse

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## Meditation in Clinical Practice & Life

### 1. Clinical Use—Meditation is the Heart of Medicine and of Self-Care

- Specific therapeutic benefits
  - Decreased stress, lowered blood pressure and blood sugar, improved mood, enhanced immunity, etc.
- Everyone I work with is coming to experience and to know themselves, moving into the moment, through meditation.
- So am I.

### 2. Meditation Transforms Us

- Meditation enlarges our perspective, allows us to see the world and ourselves more clearly, less judgmentally, and more compassionately.

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## Choosing the Right Meditation For You

### *Remember:*

- We are all unique and are always changing
- Pick a practice that calls to you
- Do it daily for a period of time, which will vary from person to person and practice to practice
- Ideally, have a particular place and hour where and when you do it

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## Choosing the Right Meditation For You

- Use a timer
- We offer you several experiences; none is "better," all may be useful
- "Tantra" means "method"
- What's right for you may not be right for someone else
- You might begin with one quiet and one active technique
- At a certain point it may well be right to change meditations
- It's great to have a teacher who knows meditation and knows you
- Be a guide, not a bully, to those you teach

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## Mind-Body Approaches

### Balance the Autonomic Nervous System

- Directly address issues of hyper-arousal by promoting physiological relaxation response
- Balance of the sympathetic fight or flight with the parasympathetic relaxation response

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## Mind-Body Approaches

### Freezing and Avoidance

- Remedy the freeze response by using active techniques
- Offer, through meditative practice and a meditative approach, a more relaxed perspective on trauma, traumatic memories, flashbacks, dreams, etc.
- Use activities that are both left and right brain and may therefore encourage reintegration of traumatic experience and the emotional reaction it produces

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## Mind-Body Groups and Trauma

- Provide a safe place, which permits those who are avoidant to come easily into contact with others
- May evoke the "tend and befriend" response of bonding under stress, a process in which cortisol and catecholamines decrease and oxytocin and opioids increase

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## Mind-Body Groups and Trauma

### Possible Mechanisms for Efficacy

- Integrate emotional experience and verbal sharing
- Possibly enhance motor and sensory integration through dance, movement, yoga, drawings, genograms, etc.
- Allow people to make coherent meaning out of their experience of which the recall, recognition and reintegration of trauma are a part by using verbal expression, drawings and genograms

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### Mind-Body Skills Groups may also provide an ongoing supportive community

- Observed in our trainings in Kosovo and at Georgetown Medical School, and in ongoing programs in Israel, Gaza, and New Orleans
- Diminishes isolation and stress
- May be used with people of all ages with chronic illness, addiction, chronic pain, bereavement, learning and behavioral disorders, etc. as well as those who identify as traumatized
- Promotes transformation
- Best described and most easily accepted as program for all those who would like to learn "MBSG for self-care"

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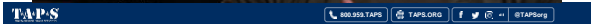
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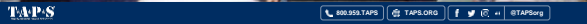
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With US Active Duty and Veterans, 800 clinicals,  
peer counselors, our model trains 30 VAs and  
military bases.



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Now training 200 Whole Health Coaches in VISN 8  
(Florida, South Georgia, and the Caribbean)

Serving 800,000 veterans

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### US Military – CMBM Randomized Controlled Trial: Preliminary Results

- 62 Veterans, 3 Reserve and 6 National Guard members
- Participants were randomized to either an intervention group of mind-body skills groups or standard treatment
- 2-hour sessions once a week for 10 weeks
- Measured:
  - symptoms of PTSD
  - feelings of anger
  - quality of sleep
  - symptoms of depression
  - anxiety
  - posttraumatic growth
  - quality of life

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### US Military – CMBM Randomized Controlled Trial: Preliminary Results

The data collected in this study so far suggest that the participation in mind-body skills groups by Veterans may be helpful in reducing PTSD symptoms, decreasing anger, and improving some and psychosocial functions

Next Step: Making CMBM's program of self-care group support available to all veterans and their families

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